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ABSTRACT

The subjective reactions of two researchers are presented to provide comment on selected aspects of public library surveys which may have similar components to those which the authors found in Portage County, Ohio in 1969 and 1970. (See "Public Library Services in Portage County; An Analysis for Planning." ED 039 907) Aspects covered include: (1) the origins of library studies, (2) choice of project consultant, (3) library study advisory committee, (4) collection and uses of demographic data, (5) collection and analysis of library information and (6) summary coments on questionnaires. (MF)

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PREPARATION FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY PLANNING
-OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS-

COMMENTARY BASED ON LIBRARY PLANNING PROCESS,
PORTAGE COUNTY, OHIO 1969 - 1970

BY

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INTRODUCTION

The following commentary was written by James B. Skellenger, Associate Director of the Center for Urban Regionalism, Kent State University, and by Mr. F. William Summers, State Librarian of Florida, on leave. These remarks are assembled to provide readers with comment on selected aspects of public library surveys which may have similar components to those which the authors found in Portage County, Ohio in 1969 and 1970.* Many aspects of Portage County are common to numerous other counties or regional areas in the United States. Some of the predominant characteristics of Portage County (of import to a library research team) are the following:

1. The county contains no distinctive urban areas, but does contain several sizeable towns, none much greater than twenty-five thousand population.

2. The county is contiguous to counties much more urban and industrial in nature which produce a suburban spill-over into Portage.

3. The county contains one county-wide library service system and two independent libraries. These three are not presently integrated to any significant extent.

4. This fragmentation of library service encourages serious library users to seek books at library systems beyond the county, creating an extensive informal regional library system.

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*See James B. Skellenger, Public Library Services In Portage County - An Analysis for Planning, (91 pp.) May, 1970. Center for Urban Regionalism, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio 44240.

5. The county is entirely dependent on the proceeds of the Ohio Intangibles Tax on securities to finance libraries. This source of income fixes the financial limits of library service, and at the same time, guarantees without political review, a continuing source of support revenues for library services.

6. Large expanses of the county are very thinly populated and are, therefore, not extensively served by libraries located in the major towns of the county.

In no sense are the following comments to be viewed as a model for library study conceptualization. They are meant rather as afterthoughts and reflections on the part of two researchers who have completed a task and have some subjective reactions to their own work which may assist others contemplating a similar exercise. The reader may profit by this account of the authors' experiences but would probably be unwise to over-generalize.

ORIGINS

Library studies, are generally originated and developed in one of the following ways:

1. A state agency, usually the state library, may have funds, resources, and personnel which can be allocated to local groups for analyzing their particular operations.

2. Library studies of a given area, county, or city may be instigated by a taxing authority which has some concern that public monies be spent as efficiently as possible, or who may wish to develop a rationale for responding to requests for additional money for library services.

3. Area library boards or area librarians may be interested in gathering data which will let them evaluate the library services that are being extended to gain a perspective on those tasks which libraries in the same political subdivision might more satisfactorily perform on a unified area-wide basis.

4. Communities engaged in long-range planning may wish to include analysis of the library service system in their total institutional analysis. In this case, professional planning agencies may embark on a library study.

The Portage County library study gained its impetus in a manner suggested by point three (3) above. In Portage County the existing Portage County District Library, which serves the total county with the exception of the school districts of Kent and Ravenna, sought to secure a review of library services and resources extant in Portage County.

As a result of this concern, a committee consisting of the librarian at each of the principal libraries (the Portage County District Library, the Kent Free Library, and the Reed Memorial Library in Ravenna) together with a board member from each library was established to coordinate the Portage County library study and to facilitate other kinds of inter-library cooperation.

Having agreed that a study should be done, the Portage County Library Committee conveyed their interest to the State Library of Ohio in Columbus, whereupon the State Librarian suggested that the Center for Urban Regionalism at Kent State University would be a suitable vehicle for coordinating the library study and producing an analysis for planning. Kent State University is located in Kent, Ohio, in Portage County, and is a major university having research components which could be turned to the task conceived.

CHOICE OF PROJECT CONSULTANT

For agencies or individuals without particular expertise in library studies, the choice of consultant to the project is crucial. Guidance in selecting a consultant can be obtained from the office of the state library involved, from the professional associations of librarians, from schools of library science, and from public or private agencies that have completed library studies with some success and dispatch.

In choosing a consultant, several recommendations should be sought. Unless a frank understanding of needs and responsibilities can be easily arrived at, the search for a suitable consultant should be continued.

Consultants can be secured who will function primarily as reactors to the research strategies of the contracting agency. In other cases, consultants actively participate in the research design and execution of the various aspects of a study.

The Portage County study team leaned very heavily on its consultant-at-large for guidance all along the way. Easy working relationships were established early in the study, and fortunately these same good relationships continued to the end.

CHOOSING A RESEARCH AGENCY

While some aspects of library services may lend themselves to self study, in general, it is far better to bring in outside researchers to examine these local phenomena. Sources for conducting studies of this sort may be found at universities with library school components, universities or colleges with research facilities, or private research agencies. In addition, regional federally supported research organizations that may be conducting multi-level analysis of community structures can, in some circumstances, take on a private research assignment of the type which library boards or area-wide library committees desire.

The State Librarian made informal inquiries of the Center for Urban Regionalism at Kent State University to determine if that agency would take on such a study. Through its director, the Center for Urban Regionalism, indicated interest and then designed and submitted a proposal which included components originally suggested by the Library Study Advisory Committee, as well as those suggested by the State Library. After the parameters of the study were established, a flow chart for completing various tasks of the study was developed.* The final proposal was approved by the Library Committee and the State Library, who agreed to share the expenses of the total study.

*See final pages of this report for illustration.

LIBRARY STUDY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Portage County Library Committee had the responsibility of overseeing the Portage County library study. This group had met on call from the Portage County District Library prior to the selection of the Center for Urban Regionalism at Kent State as the survey agent. After the approval of the Kent State proposal by the Library Study Advisory Committee, meetings of the Committee were called by the director of the Portage County library study at the Center for Urban Regionalism.

Meetings were called at various stages of the development of the project. The first meeting served to describe the library proposal to study Portage County libraries and the tentative timetable for completing various aspects of the proposal. A second meeting was called after the consultant-at-large had visited the libraries and gathered overall impressions of library services in the county. His overview presented at this early meeting gave direction to the study. The views of the researchers as well as the views of the Library Committee were altered by this early coming together and sharing of ideas and wisdom. A third meeting of the Library Committee was held when the User Survey had been completed and initial data was available for review. After the meeting on the User Survey data, the Committee proposed that this information be supplied to the various library boards in quantity, so that they could begin discussing some of the questions which the User Survey had raised relevant to their own libraries and to the library service delivery system of the entire county.

ENCOURAGING LEADERSHIP

The Library Committee was composed of board members and librarians of the three libraries who were sharing the responsibility of the direction of the study and whose institutions were sharing the cost. Unfortunately, this fine political balance prevented a leader from arising from one of the cooperating libraries. As a result, the chairing of the Study Committee meetings fell to the director of the research project. The problem of encouraging leadership to develop from liibrary advisory committees is critical to the ultimate success of regional library planning.

COLLECTION AND USES OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Demographic data describing the income levels, population growth levels, density of population, aspects of poverty, and age distribution are extremely important in the planning process. Projections of the number of potential users in the various age groups which traditionally frequent the public libraries must be gathered so that the planning process can be gauged to predictions of development for given points in future time.

Some overview of the general life style of the area, while largely subjective, does help to describe the tenor of the area for purposes of regional or national comparison. Some considerable effort was made in the Portage County Study to present a word picture of the quality of life in Portage County in the beginning of the decade of the 70's. To that end, the county was described as suburban fading to rural with wide expanses of land turned over to public uses such as water reservoir or ordnance facilities. Transportation and land use factors which help to explain the dynamics of the county were intentionally included. More could have been made of the fact that Portage County lies at the heart of the industrial quadrant of an industrial state and that while it does not contain a major city, it is surrounded by the industrial complexes of Northeastern Ohio: Cleveland, Akron, Canton, and Youngstown.

While the county does lie in this industrial vortex, it is not industrial in nature or in spirit. It is suburban to rural with suburban influence pressing down from the northwest, tapering off to nearly a prairie sparcity of population in the southern part of the county.

USES OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Considerable judgment must be employed to present a balanced application of the demographic factors in the area being studied. For most sections of the country at this time, there are very good secondary sources of information which have been frequently updated since the 1960 census. Statistical abstracts and data accumulated by Community Action Councils can be particularly useful. Generally, library studies are not sufficiently funded to allow for extensive gathering of primary data with which to describe the demographic dynamics of the area being examined.

In general, caution must be exercised to prevent the inclusion of demographic data which contributes to a general description of the area but is not really pertinent to a library study.

COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF LIBRARY INFORMATION

Library studies conducted on a local or regional basis will generally attempt to interpret the normal situation of the library without examining extremes of either high or low quality service. It becomes important to know if one group in the population had poor quality service while other groups had high quality service.

Since even in the most confined library study very large quantities of items can be involved, investigators will need to lean very strongly on the techniques of statistical sampling. One of the primary difficulties of library research will come in determining how large a sample is required for validity. There are a number of formulas available for computing sample size but require the reasearcher to have some beforehand knowledge about the degree of variability existing in whatever population he wishes to sample. The library researcher will generally not be in this position. However, any good book on statistical method can give some assistance in determining an adequate sample size. Pilot studies can also be conducted to determine the necessary facts about the variability of the items being examined.

When more than one library is to be surveyed, problems of comparability of data arise. It will generally not be possible for researchers to utilize the statistical data which libraries normally collect for operating purposes. First, it is rarely comparable from library to library. Second, within a group of librarians, one librarian is unlikely to give cre-

dence to statistics collected by another. Third, statistical data normally collected by libraries will not, in most cases, provide the kind of information which the researcher will be seeking. It will therefore usually be necessary for the researcher to develop a test and administer data collection instruments which he has designed for the specific purpose involved. This factor is the primary cause of the high cost of conducting library surveys.

In the Portage County Library Study a number of data collection methods were utilized and these will be discussed in detail below. One general comment about collecting data on libraries is appropriate. It is the authors' opinion that two areas of information about libraries which are vitally important are often neglected in library studies. The neglect is, perhaps, understandable because the two areas are the most difficult in which to collect empirical data. These are 1) the collection of performance, i.e. qualitative data, about books and other materials and resources; 2) data about the behavior of users and non-users, both individual and group users of libraries.

Data Collection And Analysis In The Portage County Library Study

There are serious limitations in the Portage County Library Study both in terms of its overall design and in relation to the physical efforts which were undertaken. The matter will be included in the discussion of the various data collection activities utilized. Overall, the major limitation of the study is the fact that it did not, for financial reasons, assess the

importance of school library services in the total library service program available in the county. In the light of the rapid development which school libraries are experiencing in Ohio and elsewhere, this must be considered a serious omission. Another area of omission which is quite important is that the study was not able to undertake any investigation of non-users of the public library although, by implication, the data about users may indicate some general information about non-users. A more thorough study of non-users should have been undertaken. This would have added considerable cost to the study which was already tightly budgeted. Future survey managers should be forewarned that collecting empirical data about non-users is a complicated and costly process and details of such investigation should be well-developed before final cost figures on the study are established.

The aforementioned data collection instruments and procedures used in the Portage County Library Study are discussed below. It should be pointed out that, with one exception, these instruments were developed especially for this study and no assertions about their applicability to other situations can be made without pretense.

I. GENERAL LIBRARY QUESTIONNAIRE

For the purpose of gathering general descriptive statistics about each library, a questionnaire was developed and administered to each chief librarian. The questions included location and age of buildings, square footage space, storage space, and parking. The questions concerning the library staff

related to the number, qualifications, and classifications of library staff members. General information about library circulation, periodical subscriptions, book and non-book resources, were collected. Information about library hours of opening were also included. It is the author's opinion that frequently library surveys include far too much of this type of general descriptive information. Its primary value is to give the researcher a picture of the library situation which can be analyzed in the light of the empirical data to be collected. It is in no way a substitute for collection of empirical data but is often used for this.

II. DATA ON BOOK RESOURCES

Several analyses of book resources were conducted. Two basic samples were used, a random sample of books selected from the library collection drawn from the public catalogs of each library, and random selection of samples of titles selected from three standard lists of recommended books for libraries. Each of these investigations will be discussed separately.

A. Age of Collection

It was considered important to gain information about the age distribution of material in collections because studies indicate that recency of publication is a major predictor of collection use.* It was observed that all the principal libraries had very crowded shelves. It was important to know the degree

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*A recent study by Dr. Stanley Slote suggests that the length of time a book has remained on the shelf without use may be a better predictor.

to which the libraries were serving a warehouse function for older materials. For this purpose systematic random samples of the collections were drawn from public catalogs and analyzed for year of publication. The samples were stratified so the proportion of adult and juvenile books in the sample corresponded to the proportion of adults and juveniles in the library's registration. If the study were to be done again, the juvenile books would probably not be included. It is believed that age is less the determining factor in children's books. Also, the sample of adult books selected would be a complete random sample rather than a systematic sample. The samples were also utilized to provide a measure of the degree of duplication among the libraries.

B. Quality of Collections

It should be recognized that to date no objective method of determination of the quality of a library collection has been developed. In this study the collections were checked against 1) a ten percent random sample of books in the latest supplement of the Standard Catalog for Public Libraries; 2) against a ten percent random sample of books listed in the latest supplement to the Fiction Catalog; and 3) against a ten percent random sample of books included in the ALA published list, Notable Children's Books, 1940-1959. It was felt that these lists would provide a useful benchmark against which these collections could be measured. Since all three lists are developed by professional librarians and are generally recognized as qualitative lists, it was thought that the results

would have general acceptability. This did not prove to be the case. For future studies the authors of this paper would recommend that researchers discuss, with the librarians involved, lists from which samples would be drawn and obtain agreement that such lists are valid for evaluating the collections of the libraries concerned.

III. TECHNICAL SERVICES QUESTIONNAIRE

Early in the study a question about the practicability of centralized processing for the libraries involved arose. A questionnaire was developed to obtain information about current practices in the libraries. The questionnaire permitted computation of information about the percentage of material cataloged on site, the hours per week spent on cataloging, and the average cost per hour spent in cataloging. In addition, an estimated annual cost per item, and an estimate of the annual cost of cataloging and processing material was determined. The questionnaire also provided means for determining and summarizing the cataloging practices of the library to gain information about the attitudes of the librarians involved. It points up attitudes about the advantages and disadvantages of using centralized processing services. Because this question was not anticipated in the design of the study, the data which the librarians did report was based on a relatively short time span. In future studies, a questionnaire should be designed in advance; the librarians would then be in a position to collect the data over a longer period of time.

SUMMARY COMMENTS ON QUESTIONNAIRES

I N S T R U M E N T: L I B R A R Y I N V E N T O R Y

DESCRIPTION	GENERAL COMMENTS	IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS
Type: Self-Administered. Largely specific data requests, some open end questions. See sample in appendix of study. Data collected: Hours open. Auxiliary services. Inter-library loans. Bookmobile usage. Staff description and training. No. of volumes and no. added in 1968 by type. Physical description by type. Librarian's perceptions of community relations. Problem areas. Daily user count for two weeks in summer.	This initial act of data gathering did more to shape the extent and scale of the total study than any other single event. It was hoped that the nature of this instrument would elicit comment and suggestions from librarians of additional items for inclusion.	The data collected from the libraries on community relations and perception of problem areas was not discriminating. This particular data could be better gathered by conducting open ended personal interviews. Interviews on public relations and problem areas should also have been administered to board members. The count of summer users, which was required as part of this instrument, should not have been asked for; it was irrelevant. One librarian correctly challenged our apparent neglect of Bookmobile services causing us to develop procedures to gather data on this aspect of library service.

I N S T R U M E N T: U S E R S U R V E Y

Type: Self-Administered. Specific data requests. See sample in appendix of study.	In addition to data collected, each user was asked to indicate his home on a map of Portage County from	Due to staff and fund limitations, the branches were studied separately and not as carefully as the main li-

Data Collected:

Reason for library visit.
Kind of books sought.
Satisfaction levels.
Assistance sought.
Use of non-book references.
Point from which visit began.
Length of trip to library.
Other libraries used.
Frequency of use.
Age, sex, education, and economic status.
Length of residence in county.

which usage density for the county was gauged.

This data provided the descriptions of composite patrons of the various libraries.

braries. While conclusions were based only on the data collected at the main libraries, it probably would have been better to test the branches and the main libraries simultaneously.

It may be worthwhile to develop special intruments and provide staff for on-the-scene interviews of bookmobile patrons on the bookmobiles during the same week the users of the main libraries and branches are surveyed.

INSTRUMENT: SOCIAL SERVICES LIBRARY USAGE INVENTORY

Type: Self-Administered. Specific data requests, general opportunities for open-end responses. See sample in appendix of study.

Data collected:

Extent of social service agency use of county libraries.

This data indicated that social service agencies were making little demand for library services. Demands made were satisfactorily responded to by librarians.

Several suggestions were made by the agencies for alterations in a few library procedures. These suggestions were passed along to the libraries.

Funds and time permitting, a similar questionnaire should be administered to other institutional groups such as business and industry, religious, and recreational organizations.

The area of centralized processing is one in which the librarians appear to have some sensitivity and investigators will need to be on guard for biases which may creep into the results reported.

IV. THE USER SURVEY

The study of user attitudes and behavior was, perhaps, the most important aspect of the data of the Portage County study. The utilization of such studies obtains valuable information justifying the considerable expense of the procedure. First, it should be emphasized that a user study must be administered in the libraries, and it should be done by individuals employed by the surveyors specifically for this purpose. It is not advisable for library employees, board members, or friends of the library to administer the user survey. Pretraining of the individuals who are to administer the questionnaires is a necessity. Both the questionnaire and the method of administration must be pretested in an environment independent of the libraries in which it will be administered. In the case of the Portage County libraries, the questionnaire used was one adapted from the study of library services in Lucas County, Ohio. It was a relatively detailed questionnaire and provided substantial amounts of information. In all but the smallest libraries it will usually be necessary to arrange for machine analysis of the results of the survey. The questions must be designed to permit easy analysis by machines. Such analysis places a limit upon the degree to which open-ended responses can be obtained from users. Facilities must also be available

for keypunching the data and this will represent a substantial cost. In very large situations it is possible to select a sample of the completed questionnaires for keypunching and analysis, thus reducing costs. In the Portage County study it was possible to analyze all of the responses received because of the small numbers involved. A complicating factor in conducting the user survey was the presence of multiple-library outlets. Ideally, investigators should be stationed at every library outlet to administer the questionnaire. This is not always practicable in the case of multi-outlet libraries or with bookmobiles. In the Portage County study the bookmobile patrons were permitted to take the questionnaires home for completion and return them by mail, or at the time of their next visit to the bookmobile. Questionnaires were also left at two small branches for interested patrons to complete. Only the responses of the patrons at the main libraries were utilized for analysis and comment.

In almost every library an important consideration will be whether to administer the questionnaire to children. The researcher faces the problem that to exclude children will usually mean excluding more than half of the users, but there are problems relating to the reliability of certain information which children might provide. For the Portage County study, only responses from adults were utilized. An alternative might be to use a sample of children or to obtain information from the children by interview, using the questionnaire rather than asking them to complete it individually. This would permit

the investigator to gain some impression of the validity of the responses to the questions. While in general, a very high percentage of responses of public library patrons can be anticipated, this fact cannot be used to relieve the investigator of the responsibility of making his survey instrument as brief as possible. It is known that the length of instrument is a factor both in the validity of the responses and in the percentage of responses obtained.

The user study permitted the preparation of a basic patron profile for each of the libraries and also a separate profile for the users who indicated that they were only partially satisfied or were dissatisfied in their search for information. This analysis, when compared with the analysis of book resources, was considered to be a very valuable measure of the qualitative performance of the libraries.

The question of timing the administration of the user survey is an important one. In the Portage County study a single week, that of November 17, 1969, was utilized. Time and resources permitting, it would probably be preferable to utilize six days during a six week period, i.e. Monday the first week, Tuesday the second week, Wednesday the third week, etc. Factors of time and cost will undoubtedly be determinants of this strategy in most studies.

An important element in the user study was the analysis of other libraries used by patrons of each of the public libraries. The results from this data were quite surprising. In one case eighteen other libraries were mentioned as being

used at least as often as once or twice. Sixteen libraries were mentioned as being used occasionally or often. Considering the three libraries, the least number of other libraries used by patrons was twelve. The findings suggest in this instance at least, that a surprising amount of inter-library use exists. This use would seem to be an important factor to measure in any library study.

An important outcome of the user survey was the opportunity to determine the basic service area from which the users are drawn. This is an important fact because of the general lack of information about how far people will travel to use public library facilities. Much of the design of library systems is based on the assumption that people will travel substantial distances to obtain information which they desire. Available research on a number of user surveys in libraries is beginning to produce serious doubt that individuals will travel as far as might be estimated, and in any library study it would seem important to obtain this information. In Portage County an average of 83.3% of the users traveled less than fifteen minutes to the library, and an average of 87% traveled five miles or less to reach the library. Since the question of how far users are traveling to reach library facilities has important implications for planning branch outlets, designing bookmobile routes, planning library systems, and inter-library cooperative arrangements, the user study should permit the analysis of this type question.

V. OPINIONS OF SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES

An important, identifiable client group of the public library services is other social agencies working in the community. A questionnaire was utilized to obtain information from a list of thirty-nine agencies or service organizations in the county. Slightly less than half of the agencies responded. General experience indicates that a relatively low response rate can be anticipated from such a questionnaire. Time factors permitting, a better technique would be a personal interview of these agencies. In most communities, however, the cost of interviewing the many social agencies would be prohibitive.

Social agencies were asked to describe the in-house libraries which they maintained. The development of such libraries cannot be taken as a direct measure of the degree to which public libraries meet the needs of such agencies, but the presence of a large number of well-developed libraries in such social agencies might be indicative of lack of contact with the public library.

The questionnaire also asked for responses on the degree to which the agency had made requests to the public library in their service program and whether the libraries had been able to provide the information requested. In addition, the questionnaire also asked the agency to indicate whether it was their practice to suggest that their clients visit the public library for books or information. Finally, the social service agencies were asked to list any recommendations they had for improved services from the public library. In some cases the recom-

mendations indicated a lack of knowledge of program services already in existence. In several cases, the recommendations called for provision of new services which the public libraries were not providing.

MISSING ANALYSES

Two instruments of analysis were omitted from the study due to financial priorities.

It was originally hoped that a survey of non-library users could be made. This component could have been developed by the use of a random marketing sample which had been constructed for use in Portage County. A range of questions which would have probed the attitudes of the general public toward library services, or the lack of them, would contribute an important view of library functions not dependent on the ideas of library users and professionals.

A second major missing component is an analysis of the library services provided by the public schools and the linkages between school and public library use. The development of vastly improved school libraries in the last ten years and the effect of this development on the traditional service patterns of public libraries should have been dealt with empirically.

While not viewed as a major missing link, the fact that the researchers did not conduct a simple telephone check of the ability of the various libraries to respond to telephone information inquiries is regretted.

VI. SUBJECTIVE MEASURES OF LIBRARY PERFORMANCE

During the course of the study a number of opportunities for obtaining subjective information about the performance of public libraries occurred. The information obtained from such occurrences is generally quite random and highly unpredictable. Investigators must be sensitive to obtaining information which can be gathered by unobtrusive observation of the library and from direct conversations with librarians, library staff members, and board members. This type of information, while not in itself conclusive, can be, when coupled with empirical data, very revealing of attitudes which must be considered in the development of long range plans. Two of these measures are discussed below.

A. Structured Interviews

Investigation should include structured interviews in each of the library units in operation. Such interviews may frequently be coupled with the obtaining of general descriptive data for the report. The interview should be as wide-ranging as possible and the librarian, who would be the respondent, should be encouraged to discuss a wide variety of attitudes and ideas about the particular program at her library and about library services in general. The interviews will give the investigator an excellent view of the attitudes the librarians have on a number of critical issues. In addition, such interviews may alert investigators to those areas in which controversy can be expected. In addition to the interviews, the investigator should observe as many factors about the library as possible. Some important areas are the nature and quality

of directional and informational signs provided for users; the general level of maintenance and upkeep of buildings; the overall condition of the book collections; the areas to which the public has access or is denied access; the existence of closed book stacks and the nature of the material included there; the kinds of material placed in storage in the library; the general atmosphere of the staff rooms; and the condition of public meeting rooms and their conduciveness to public discussion. It will also generally be possible to observe staff members and their relations with library users, both in person and over the telephone. The public catalog should be examined to gain an impression of the ease of its use. It will also be helpful to observe patrons using the catalog.

In addition, it is possible to gain an overall impression of the atmosphere of the library, its friendliness, the comfort of its furniture, the conduciveness to study, and a variety of factors of atmosphere. It is also possible to calculate the amount of total space devoted to library process purposes in contrast to space allocated to other non-public uses.

It must be recognized that in multiple-outlet libraries personal interviews will require a considerable amount of the investigator's time. Such interviews are, however, of such importance that considerations of time and cost should not be permitted to interfere.

B. Meetings of the Advisory Committee

In most library studies the existence of an Advisory Committee of librarians, board members, and interested citizens can be assumed. Observation and analysis of a functioning

committee must be considered as part of the data collection function, as well as a portion of the presentation function. In Advisory Committee meetings manifestations of attitudes, including presence or absence of leadership, and the general willingness to explore basic and difficult questions, can be determined.

Such meetings also should not be overlooked as an opportunity for increased education of board members and librarians in terms of the goals and objectives of the state-wide programs of library development and major social functions of public libraries. The creation of such broad understandings may have significant value in terms of the implementation of recommendations which may be included in the report.

The meetings of the Advisory Committee are also important for development of leadership which will be required for implementation of the recommendations. While the development of such leadership may not be the responsibility of the investigator, the necessity of its development should not be overlooked. Ideally, meetings should be designed to facilitate the emergence of leadership within the advisory group.

An effective Advisory Committee should function to advise the investigator on the progress of the study and particularly to assist in the evaluation of results, and to raise questions on the various methodologies that have been employed in the survey.

The opportunity for Advisory Committee members to meet together to direct a task - the survey - may serve also to assist the group assembled to see their several problems as common

problems. This process of purposeful thinking directed toward resolving problems in a common framework is undoubtedly one of the most significant aspects of the survey process. While the researchers will properly be primarily concerned with the process of the investigation, they must be sensitive to the social and political interrelations of the libraries and library board members involved in the study.

PLANNING FOR CHANGE

The Portage County Library Study was titled, *Public Library Services In Portage County - An Analysis for Planning.* Hopefully, this title conveyed the notion that while the report contained hard analysis and firm directions for planning, the plan for developing library service in Portage County is yet to be written. The final plan for Portage County or any other county or region similarly engaged in rationally estimating its future must be the result of political compromise and the wisdom of all of the interested groups involved.

A planning instrument such as the document submitted to the Library Committee by the staff of the Center for Urban Regionalism does not contain those elements of political compromise or grass roots wisdom which the final working model will have.

"The plan" is a document which leads to the on-going processes of setting objectives (in a political context) and evaluating progress in satisfying those objectives.

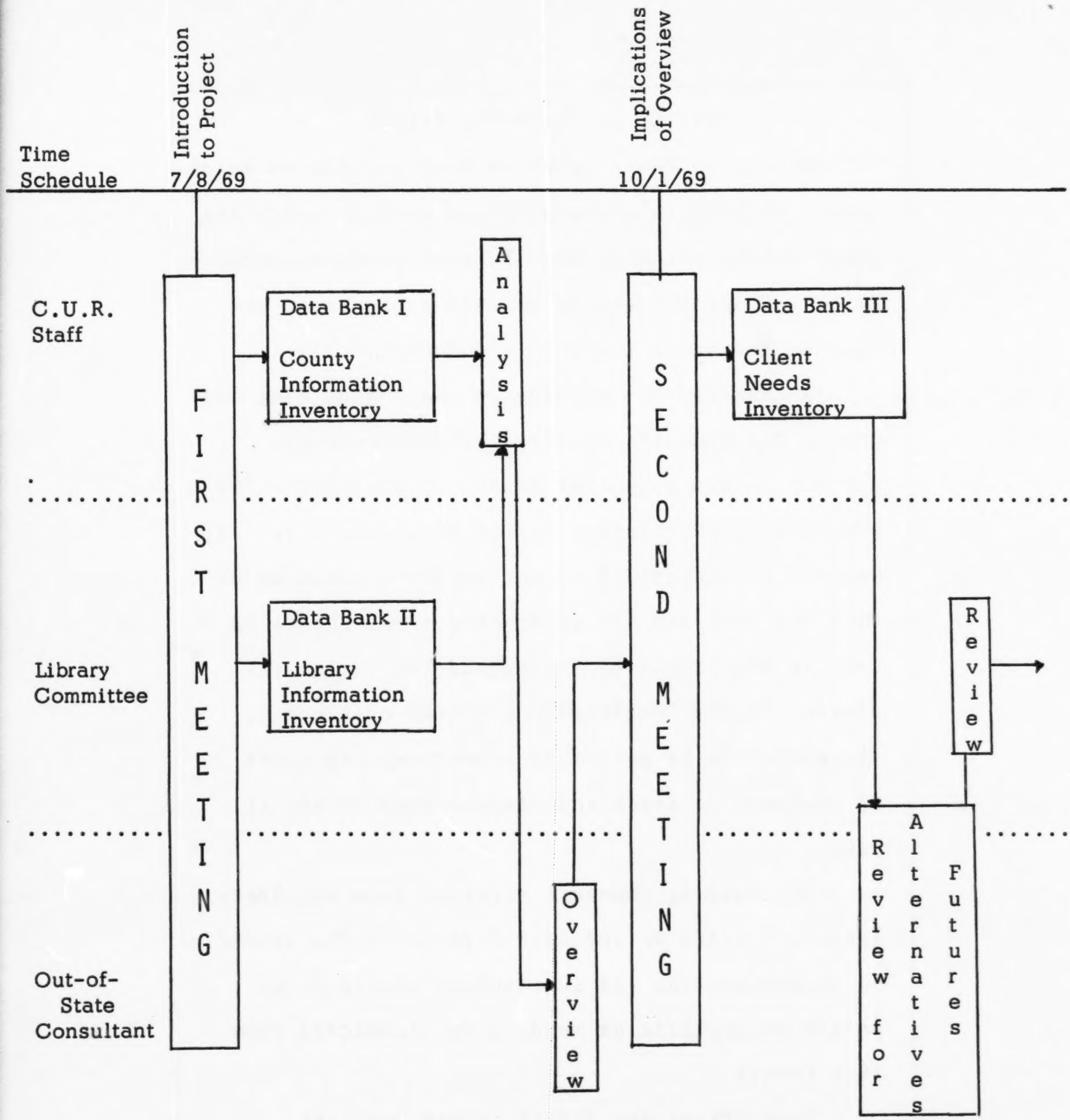
EDITING OF THE FINAL REPORT

In addition to those usual editing procedures which assist greatly in clarifying the written word, the final report was also read by non-involved academics at Kent State University as well as by staff members of the State Library in Columbus.

In addition to spotting an inaccuracy here and there, the comments of these readers assisted greatly in avoiding some errors of protocol. The addition of the section titled "Overview", (p. 61) was the direct result of one reader's observation that the text did not quite bridge the points of data to the points of recommendations. The inclusion of the "Overview" is a real evidence of the profit to be gained by submitting any piece of analysis to fresh and unencumbered points of view.

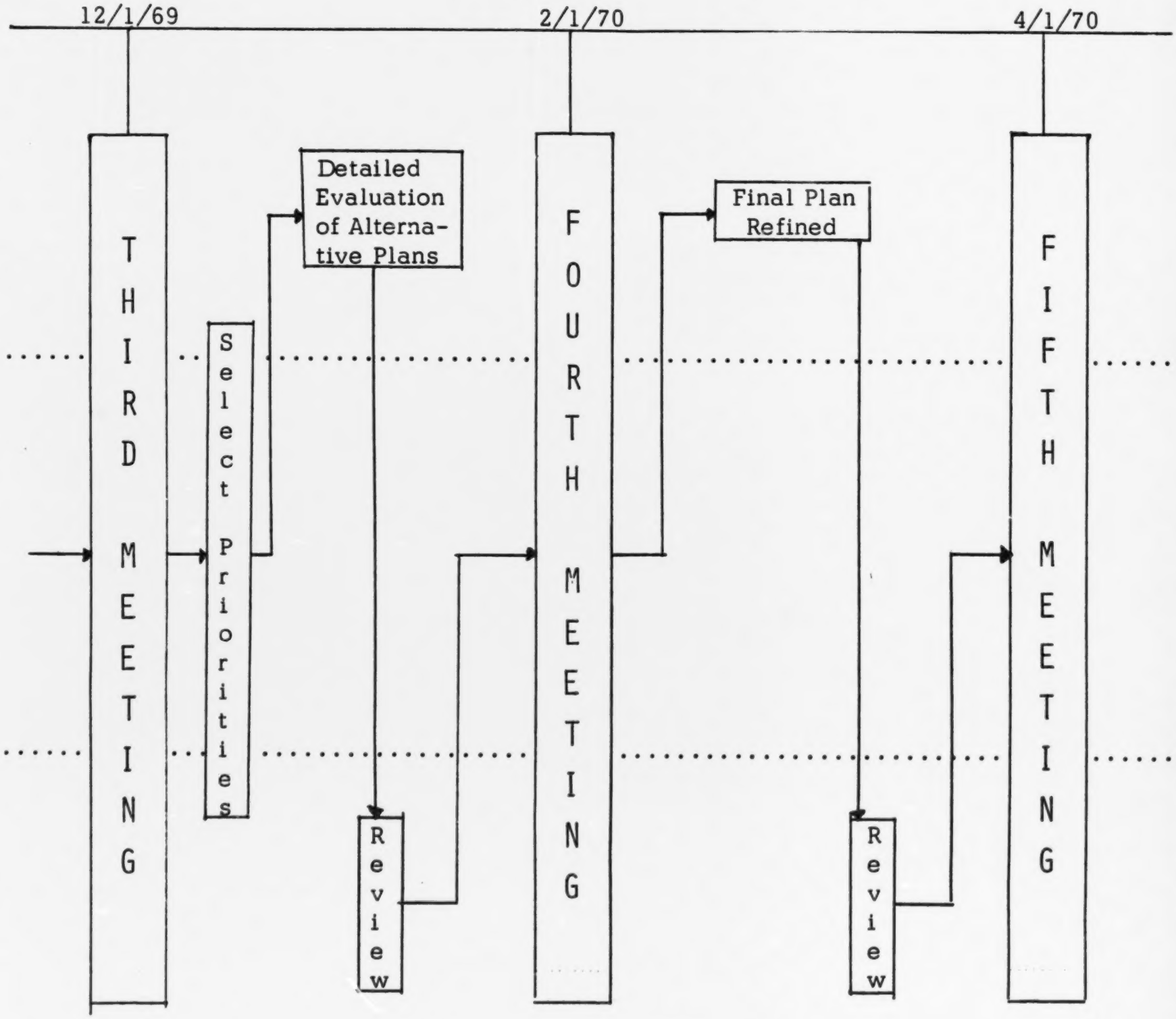
The editing comments received from the State Library related to specific details of the report. No recommendation for substantive change in approach or emphasis or wording was submitted from this source.

Suggestions for detail change were all incorporated in the final draft. In one or two instances, commentators disagreed on the same detail. In those instances, dilemmas over details were resolved by following the line of least resistance.



FLOW CHART OF LIBRARY

At the very earliest point in considering staff and resource needs to accomplish the Portage County Library Study, the "Flow Chart" was conceived. This document assisted all staff and library committee members in visualizing progress



PLANNING PROCESS

and establishing operating goals for the study. The flow chart was followed without serious deviation. Most deadlines were met although the final formal report was delivered approximately thirty days after the deadline.